THE EIGHTH DAY.

6th March, 1924.

The Assembly met at 11-30 A. M. on Thursday, the 6th March, 1924.

The Dewan presided.

94. Public Service.

Mr. K. N. Padmanabha Pillai (Member, Municipal Council, Padmanabhapuram) dealt first with the question of reserving the public service in Travancore wholly for Travancoreans. He said that there was no need for an outsider any longer in the Travancore service. He had no stake in the State and as such was lacking in interest for the State and naturally demanded more pay. He also thought that want of continuity of a fixed and well-thought-out Government policy was due to the advent of foreign Dewans. A foreigner took much time to learn local conditions before he did something and in the nature of things he could not have much sympathy. Travancore did not always get first rate men, and the result was inefficiency and confusion.

The Member then spoke of the comparatively high pay of public servants in Travancore, and remarked that high pay alone could never secure efficiency. Travancore was once ruled by men like Raja Kesava Das and Rama Aiyan Dalava who did not draw thousands of rupees for the sacrifices they underwent in the interests of the State. A spirit of patriotism should be infused into the minds of Travancore officials. The percentage now spent on the salaries of Government officials was beyond all proportion and did not indicate a sound policy. The Member observed that, while the Chief Justice of Japan received only Rs. 700 or 800, Travancore had more than a dozen officials of less importance drawing a similar sum or more. He suggested also the reduction of pensions from fifty per cent. to thirty-three per cent. and of travelling allowances to the actual expenses incurred.

The Member next referred to appointments, promotions and transfers. He said that the success of administration depended entirely on the personnel of the officers and that character should be an important factor in the selection. The recruitment in the various departments should be so effected as to give equally qualified men who entered the various departments at a particular time equal opportunities to rise in rank and pay. Pitchforking men from one department to another should be discouraged. Appointments, transfers and promotions should be made on certain principles and not at the whim of the Head of the Administration or the head of the department. Retirement should be enforced at the age of 55, and there should be no breaches of this rule.

The Member then passed on to corruption in the public service. That began, he said, 35 years ago. Undue promotion, undue degradation and undue confirmation might also be classed under corruption. When the head of a department demanded and received commission; it was corruption. If a Government official drew T. A. when he went on private business, that was corruption. To transfer a subordinate because his superior was not pleased with him for certain private reasons was also corruption. The Member concluded that much purification was called for in the public service of Travancore.

He finally proposed a few remedies for removing the forms of corruption pointed out by him. Men of high character should be appointed as heads of departments, and they should be asked to keep confidential diaries wherein should be noted the conduct of every officer under them. The Dewan and the heads of departments in their circuits to villages should invite respectable men and elicit their sincere opinion about local officers. The Administration Report should also contain the names of villages the Dewan visited during the year as also the number of days he spent in each. A Royal Proclamation on the lines of the recent *firman* issued by the H. E. H. the Nizam of Hyderabad should be promulgated and above all a genuine attempt should be begun to put down corruption.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

Mr. R. Narayana Pillai (Member, Vilavankod taluk) began by saying that the term 'Subject of His Highness the Maha Raja,' as defined in Article 40 A of the Travancore Service Regulations, was wide enough to embrace any applicant for a post in the State service. He urged the desirability of making suitable modifications to the definition so that only the real subjects of H. H. the Maha Raja came within its scope. Referring to the qualifications of persons recruited to the service, the Member suggested that a knowledge of Malayalam, the language of the country, should be insisted on in the case of every recruit and that an article should be inserted in the Service Regulations to the effect that no one who did not pass a public examination in Malayalam or public examination in which Malayalam is an optional subject should be appointed in the State service without the special sanction of Government. The Member then observed that the recording of the age of officers in their service book was a matter intimately connected with their retirement on the completion of their 55th year of age. Article 352 C of the Service Regulations required that the age of an officer should be recorded only on receipt of satisfactory proof, but, as this rule was very rarely enforced, public servants often found it convenient to reduce their age in official records. The Member knew several instances of officers who had sinned in the matter and continued in the service under false pretensions. He thought that those officers, who were dishonest towards the Government they served, could hardly be expected to be honest in their dealings with the people. As a remedy for the evil, the Member suggested that, in the case of future entrants into the service, Government should order that those who had secured the English School Leaving or the Vernacular School Leaving Certificate should produce the certificate in which their date of birth would be entered by the school authorities, while in regard to those who had passed any university examinations, certified copies of their applications for admission to those examinations should be produced. In the case of those already in the service, and particularly of those drawing Rs. 150 and above, who were mostly persons with university qualifications, the Member's suggestion was that they should be asked to produce, within a time to be fixed, certified copies of their applications for admission to the examination they had passed and that the dates given in the history of their services should be verified with the dates given in the application forms and the necessary corrections made in the service books. The Member then referred to the existence of corruption in different forms throughout the State service. Some officers in the service resorted to all manner of corrupt practices in the distribution of patronage, award of promotions, and attempts at discouraging local talents and blighting the prospects of deserving subordinates by stabbing them from behind through the so-called confidential reports. Government had often stated that they would be ready to punish all official misdeeds if brought to their notice. But the disallowance of motions tabled at the meetings of the Legislative Council and the replies given to interpellations showed that Government were not keeping their word. The Member laid special stress on the necessity for repressing official nepotism and concluded his representation with the request that those officers who were guilty of appointing exclusively the members of their own caste might be forthwith dismissed.

Mr. B. Krishna Pillai B. A. & B. L. (Member, Trivandrum taluk) stated that the government of Travancore was defective in that it was not responsible to the people and that it was neither free from corruption, nor efficient, nor progressive. He further observed that it had no fixed principles or policy. Another evil that the Member dwelt upon was the overwhelming preponderance of foreigners in the Travancore Service who, according to him, not only filled the rank and file, but even presided over a dozen departments. He attributed this preponderence of foreigners to the long succession of foreign Dewans who introduced their friends and relations from outside into the State service.

Endeavouring to substantiate the statement that the Government had no fixed policy, the Member observed that no constructive programme had been adopted to combat the growing unemployment in the country and that the labours of the Industrial and Agricultural Departments were not productive of any fruitful results. The present Educational policy was also contributory to the increase of un-employment. The Abkari policy ought to be changed, so as to make absolute prohibition

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

the ultimate goal to be reached. That must go hand in hand with a strong yet unoppressive system of preventive work and an increase in the duty on arrack and tree tax. The working of the Police and the Land Records Maintenance Departments was equally unsatisfactory.

By way of illustration of lack of principles in the matter of administration, the Member alluded to the recent revision of the scale of pay of professors in the College and alleged that scales of pay were revised from time to time to favour or disfavour particular individuals. He mentioned the cases of the appointment of Messrs. Ayappan Pillai and Thomas in the College on the revised lower scale and said that he heard that Messrs. Ramakrishna Aiyar and Srinivasan were proposed to be appointed as professors on the old scale of pay which was characterised by the Member as a scandal. Hs said that the same lack of principle was to be found in the appointment of Mr. A. Venkitarama Aiyar as District Judge in disregard of the claims of many of his seniors and that the status of Sirkar Vakils was still left unsettled. It was his opinion that caste considerations were the determining factor in the matter of appointments and promotions in the Public Works Department and that corruption went on unchecked. As instances he referred to the cases of Supervisors Messrs. K. R. Raman Pillai and K. N. Raman Pillai, who, he alleged, were victims of such unfair discrimination. The Member also pointed out as another instance the entertainment of Mr. G. V. Subrahmanya Aiya and his promotion to the Sub-Engineers' grade. He then detailed what he considered to be charges of corruption. The Member also stated that Mr. Rama Variar in the Chief Engineer's Office was not given his legitimate promotion, while Mr. O. S. Sundaram Aiyar was promoted over the head of Mr. G. Krishna Pillai. Corruption was rampant in the Excise Department and shocking abuses of power, due mainly to appointing men of no qualifications and character to places of high responsibility, were becoming common in the Police Department. He suggested that only men of high educational qualifications should be appointed as Assistant Superintendents and District Superintendents of Police.

The Medical Department also was guilty of unfairness in the matter of promotions to its subordinates, while the Sanitary Department would appear to exist for the Members of the Brahmin community, because the present Sanitary Commissioner was a Brahmin.

The Member concluded by pointing out the necessity of Government following a firm and well-defined policy, of keeping a strict watch over the working of the several Departments and of eradicating corruption wherever found.

Mr. S. J. Nair (Member, Chirayinkil taluk) began by saying that the policy pursued by Government in the matter of recruitment to the public service was, in certain respects, highly objectionable. The claims of qualified natives were invariably passed over in favour of foreigners who were being freely entertained in the State service. Most of the political, social, moral and economic evils that were found in the State at the present day were, in the opinion of the Member, the direct outcome of the practice of importing foreigners into the service, which was detrimental to the interests of the people and the State alike. Another regrettable feature of the public service was the encouragement given to particular communities and the consequent promotion of communal strife among the subjects of the State. The Member thought that the policy of "divide and rule" constituted a serious obstacle to the healthy growth of the spirit of nationalism. Trafficking in appointments was another matter for regret. Corruption in various forms existed throughout the State service, and unfair dealing was often noticeable in matters of appointment, promotion and extension of service. Again, the pay of the higher ranks of the State service was very high, while that of the lower ranks was abnormally low. The Member then summarised his suggestions as follow—

(1) The foreigners now employed in the State service should be disbanded within a fixed time-limit.

(2) The entertainment of foreigners in the service should be wholly dispensed with.

(3) In the matter of appointments and promotions, encouragement should be given only to qualified subjects of the State.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

(4) Corruption should be prevented by means of a legislative enactment like the *firman* of H. E. H. the Nizam of Hyderabad to enable the people to bring their grievances to the notice of the Government and get them effectively redressed.

(5) The salaries of high-paid servants should be reduced and those of low-paid servants suitably raised. The maximum pay of the heads of Departments should be Rs. 500, while the Dewan's pay should not exceed Rs. 1,000.

(6) Responsible government should be established in the State.

Mr. G. Venu Vadhyar (Member, Trading Classes, Quilon) said that his community, *viz.*, that of the Gaudasaraswat Brahmins, was backward in education, but that, of late, a few members of that community had received good education and become qualified for the public service. The Member prayed that sufficient encouragement might be given to his community and that appointments be conferred on those who were qualified for the same.

Mr. Ulahannan Ulahannan (Member, Minachil taluk), in dealing with the subject of communal representation in the matter of appointments in the public service, stated that Christians formed a large portion of the population of the State, and that, among the Christians themselves, Roman Catholics formed the majority. As Christians were strong both numerically and educationally, they deserved much better encouragement in the matter of appointments in the public service than they received at present. As a means of removing the existing inequalities in the public service, the Member recommended that for the next seven years all caste Hindus excepting Malayala Brahmins should be excluded from all departments of the State service except the Devaswom Department.

Mr. C. P. Tarakan (Member, Kunnatnad taluk) laid special stress on the need for a strict observance of the provisions of the rule regarding age-limit in the public service. No one who had shown clannishiness in the distribution of the loaves and fishes of office should be retained beyond his 55th year. He said that on account of the non-observance of that golden rule the High Court had suffered in prestige. He could not understand why the majority of the official reporting staff of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly should come from a particular community. He then spoke about the hardship caused to the people by the working of the *Civil Courts' Guide* and, as the grievances of the public had been ably dealt with, he did not want to elaborate on that point. The next point of his complaint was that printed forms for the disbursement of interest on the debenture loan raised by the State were not available, which put the people to great hardship. The Member also alluded to the unsatisfactory work of the Police Department.

95. Defects in some branches of the public service and suggestions for remedying the same.

Mr. M. L. Janardana Pillai (Member, Trading Classes, Alleppey) stated that he would like to make a few preliminary observations on some general questions. He said that the shorthand writers' notes taken in the Assembly were far from accurate and suggested that they should be corrected by the members before publication, as was generally done in the case of notes taken by official reporters in the Legislative Council. Another observation made by the Member was that, even though immediate replies were given to representations, there was great delay in giving practical effect to them.

Referring to the District and Assistant Superintendents in the Police Department, the Member observed that the object with which the posts of Assistant Superintendents had been created could very well be achieved by the head clerks of the offices concerned and that officers on such fat salaries were not needed. The Member was of opinion that they should be given efficient police service in the several taluks. The difficulty experienced by the people in regard to complaints lodged with the police was next touched upon. Constables, he asserted, were making a good income out of those complaints and the suffering to which people were put was intense, especially when many constables conducted repeated enquiries into one and the same complaint. The enquiry should always be conducted by the Police Inspectors in charge of the stations themselves. If the complaints received in a station were too

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly